

Planning Applications Manager
High Peak Borough Council
Planning Department
Municipal Buildings
Glossop
Derbyshire
SK13 8AF

For the attention of James Stannard

Your Ref: HPK/2024/0255

Our ref: DWTHPK748

19th November 2024

Dear James,

Proposal: Retention of use of land as dog exercise area from agricultural field.

Location: Land at, Park Road, Hadfield, Glossop, Derbyshire, SK13 1EP

Application Ref No: HPK/2024/0255

With reference to the above application, I am responding as the Biodiversity Planning Officer responsible for work relating to the Service Level Agreement, which the High Peak Borough Council and the Trust have signed. The following comments are aimed at providing accurate and up to date information on the nature conservation issues associated with the proposed development.

Response

We have reviewed the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) (Leigh Ecology Ltd., August 2024), the Gain Plan (Leigh Ecology Ltd., August 2024) and the completed metric.



Whilst the habitat survey was carried out at suitable time of year (August 2024), the photos indicate that the grass was very short, having been recently mown. The PEA states that the field is managed for silage and that it comprises modified grassland. Whilst the photos do indicate that the grassland is grass-dominated, with few forbs visible, the recent cut reduces the confidence in the grassland classification and condition assessment. Adjacent fields appear to support rush pasture and it is unclear whether this field would appear similar, if left unmown. The PEA also states that a ditch is present on the western boundary, however this is not mapped or included in the metric.

No data consultation was undertaken with Derbyshire Biological Record Centre as part of the PEA. Guidance provided by CIEEM¹ advises that Local Record Centres are included within desk studies to contextualise the application site, inform requirements for further surveys and aid the assessment of impacts. Due to the absence of a data consultation, the nearby Local Wildlife Site has been omitted from the report and local records of protected and notable species have not been considered. In particular, adequate consideration has not been given to ground-nesting birds.

Several comments from members of the public refer to ground-nesting birds and barn owl, including comments stating that lapwing nest on site and / or in the locality. We have checked Derbyshire Biological Record Centre, which holds a number of pertinent bird records for the local area. These include lapwing, curlew, redwing, fieldfare and barn owl. Based on a review of Google Street View and the details in the PEA, the application area (and immediately adjacent fields) appears suitable for such species. In addition, the application area is located within an area highlighted on MAGIC² for targeting management to benefit lapwing within Countryside Stewardship Schemes.

The PEA merely states that no evidence of ground-nesting birds was recorded, however this would be expected in August and after recent cutting. A robust assessment cannot be made on this single visit.

A change of use to a dog exercise field would likely deter ground-nesting species completely from using the site during spring and early summer due to the disturbance to nests. There is also a risk that it could disturb nesting birds on adjacent fields. For example, a disturbance

¹ CIEEM (2020) Guidelines for Accessing, Using and Sharing Biodiversity Data in the UK. 2nd Edition. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management. Winchester, UK.

² <https://magic.defra.gov.uk/MagicMap.aspx>

buffer of 300 m³ is recommended for breeding curlew and 100 m for lapwing⁴. During winter, it may deter a variety of birds which feed on upland pastures and agricultural fields. Lapwing and curlew are both on the UK Red List due to severe declines in numbers and in order to properly assess the impacts of the proposed use, a better understanding of how birds use the field and adjacent fields is required.

At this time, we would advise that sufficient information has not been provided to determine the ecological impacts of the proposals and we advise the following:

- Detailed information should be provided on the management of the application area (and adjacent fields if known) i.e. cutting regime.
- Data consultation should be undertaken with DBRC to inform a review of the local bird assemblage.
- Breeding bird survey should be undertaken within the site and adjacent fields during spring and early summer 2025.

During the survey visits, the opportunity should be taken to verify the grassland classification and condition assessment in spring/summer, prior to cutting. The metric should be updated to include the ditch, unless the red line boundary is amended.

It is hoped that the information provided is helpful to the Council. If you require any further information or wish to discuss any of the comments made, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

Libby Duggan-Jones MBiolSci MCIEEM
Biodiversity Planning Officer

Endnote:

Please see our planning pages <https://www.derbyshirewildlifetrust.org.uk/planning> for ecological advice on submitting a planning application, finding an ecological consultant and information on mitigation and enhancement.

³ <https://www.nature.scot/doc/disturbance-distances-selected-scottish-bird-species-naturescot-guidance>

⁴ Hötter, H., Thomsen, K.-M. & H. Jeromin (2006): Impacts on biodiversity of exploitation of renewable energy sources: the example of birds and bats - facts, gaps in knowledge, demands for further research, and ornithological guidelines for the development of renewable energy exploitation. Michael-OttoInstitut im NABU, Bergenhusen